

## A PASTORAL LETTER

CONFERENCE MINISTER DONALD J. SEVETSON

One of the unique features of the 1980's political landscape is the aggressive campaign urged by a large group within the Christian Community. Under the title, "Moral Majority", this movement seeks to use what they believe to be Christian moral standards to distinguish good candidates from bad, in order to lead America "back to God". The impact of this movement cannot be accurately measured, but may be considerable.

The United Church of Christ upholds a long and distinguished tradition that promotes responsible Christian involvement in the affairs of citizenship. It dates back to Puritan "election sermons", to Thomas Hooker's authorship of the constitution of the state of Connecticut, and to vigorous campaigns against war, slavery, and economic and social injustice. Thus, we should not be displeased or surprised when other religious people seek to exercise their influence upon the direction of our common life, even when their views are opposed to our own.

The "Moral Majority" and their companions, "Christian Voice" and "Religious Round Table", however, go far beyond simple preferences among candidates and efforts to influence legislation. They claim to have identified a small number of issues - promotion of military spending, opposition to abortion, the ERA, and the rights of homosexual persons - which can be used to evaluate a candidate's moral quality, or lack of it. Thus, according to Martin Marty (*Christian Century*, June 18-25, 1980, p. 687), an Illinois Congressman, Paul Simon, (an active Lutheran layman) who had worked tirelessly to solve world hunger problems got a moral rating of zero from Christian Voice. Meanwhile, Rep. Richard Kelly of Florida, indicted in the Abscam scheme, nevertheless received a moral rating of one hundred! The magic moral list did not include fighting hunger or resisting corruption.

Such distortion and oversimplification would be laughable if it were not so dangerous. We must never forget that it was complacent Christians, confident that they were doing the right thing, who supported such historic horrors as the Holocaust, the Inquisition, apartheid, slavery, segregation, and the eviction of American Indians from their prairies and mountains. And we must be doubly suspicious when we discover that wealthy individuals like Bunker Hunt of Texas provide large amounts of funding for such groups. Such support does not come without a large political price. Mr. Hunt has his own goals, as this year's fluctuations in the price of silver so aptly demonstrate, and he will not hesitate to use others - even a "Moral Majority" to accomplish them.

Faithful Christians of every church, profoundly aware of the tendency of all human beings to cover their selfish values with the mantle of religion, will be wary of programs such as "Moral Majority". There are many issues before the electorate this year. Making choices won't be easy. We must, however, keep issues of justice, peace, and dignity for all persons in the forefront of our thinking. And we must support candidates who will support the general public interest, and resist the control of single interests and special interests.

Jesus' parable in Matthew 25 states, with penetrating force, "I was hungry, and you gave me food; thirsty, and you gave me drink; naked, and you clothed me; sick, and in prison, and you visited me". Surely Christian morality can never be described without including acts such as these, and a righteous nation will embody such basic concerns. (cont'd on page 2)



## OLIVER LECTURE SLATES UCC CHURCH LEADER

The Third Annual Helen Oliver Memorial Lecture will take place Sunday, October 26, at First Congregational Church, Portland. The lecturer this year is The Reverend Everett C. Parker, Director of the Office of Communication for the UCC. Two lectures, scheduled for 5:00 and 8:00 p.m., are entitled "Big Business in Religious Television" and "Your Rights in Broadcasting: Today's Biggest Government Giveaway."

Dr. Parker has headed the Office of Communication for more than a decade, during which time he has been responsible for the denomination's relationships to the press, television and radio, and for educational work in mass communication.

A graduate of the University of Chicago, Dr. Parker has been awarded honorary degrees from Catawba College, The Chicago Theological Seminary and Fordham University.

First Congregational Church invites persons attending the Lecture to make reservations for a banquet scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Persons desiring banquet tickets (\$4.00) can reserve them by calling the church at 228-7219.

## ECUMENICAL MINISTRIES PREPARES BALLOT GUIDE

A guide to eight Oregon ballot measures to be on the November 4 ballot has been prepared by the Legislative Commission of EMO and is available from the EMO office in Portland at the cost of 50¢. The Guide is designed as an educational tool. Each measure is described and a series of discussion questions is given. Pro and con statements follow, written by persons holding strong views about the measure. The Legislative Commission's voting recommendation follows with a statement by the Commission.

## A PASTORAL LETTER (cont'd)

Once upon a time, some ministers came Abraham Lincoln, assuring him that "God is on our side". Lincoln responded that his prayer was "Not that God be on our side, but that we be on God's". So must we pray, and act, in 1980.

## ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS PROMPT RESPONSES

Two resolutions passed by delegates to the 18th Annual Assembly have prompted response from the national level. In response to the resolution urging President Carter declare a presidential unilateral ban on permanently debilitating nerve gas and the binary weapon, Ralph Earle II, Director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency wrote, in part:

*"I believe that we have a common goal - the complete and effective prohibition of chemical weapons. However, we believe most promising means of achieving that goal is to negotiate mutual and verifiable treaty constraints which involve both Soviet and U.S. Forces. Chemical weapons pose a significant military threat and have in fact already been used in war and in part for these reasons, we do not consider unilateral renunciation an effective approach toward eliminating the threat of the use of such weapons."*

In response to the resolution expressing opposition to the plan for peacetime registration, Congressman Les AuCoin, Oregon 1st District wrote:

*"I couldn't agree with the Assembly's position more. I, too, am strongly opposed to the proposal for a peacetime registration system. I voted on April 22 against the legislation. I agree that, should those who register be drafted in the future, deferments for conscientious objectors and others should be permitted."*

FALL CONFERENCE COUNCIL - OCT. 1  
ZION UCC, GRESHAM

**NIN** Neighbors  
In Need  
United Church of Christ

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5

## MINISTRY OF VOLUNTEERS EVENTS RESCHEDULED

The Office for Church Life and Leadership and the Central Pacific Conference Nominations and Leadership Recruitment Committee have rescheduled three workshops on the Ministry of Volunteers. An all-day workshop will be conducted at Highland United Church of Christ, Portland, on Saturday, October 25, beginning at 10 a.m. and concluding by 4 p.m. Two abbreviated workshops are also scheduled: the first on Monday, October 27, from 6:30 to 10 p.m., at First Congregational Church, The Dalles. The second abbreviated workshop will be conducted at First Congregational Church, Eugene, on Tuesday, October 28. It also will begin at 6:30 and conclude by 10 p.m.

The Reverend Kenneth Iha from the San Francisco OCLL office will be the workshop leader in each location. Each church is invited to send a delegation of three persons including the minister and two lay persons who are responsible for recruitment of volunteers in the local church. Registration cost is \$30.00 per church. Included in the cost of registration are meals for a delegation of three and one copy of THE MINISTRY OF VOLUNTEERS. Additional participants are invited. There is a \$6.00 registration fee for each additional participant.

Fliers and registration forms have been sent to Conference churches. Questions about these events should be directed to Gene Ross at the Conference Office (228-3178).

**EDITORIAL NOTE:** Perhaps you have noticed that this issue of the NEWS looks different from those which have preceded it. The quality of the publication may not be up to the past. The reason for this is that this edition of the NEWS has been processed in its entirety at the Conference Office. Because of vacation schedules we were not able to send this NEWS to our regular printer. The November issue of the NEWS will return to its regular process. Remember, all items for the NEWS must be in the Conference Office by the 5th of the month preceding publication date.

- Eugene Ross

## The Local Scene

*Congratulations to Rick and Elfreda Skidmore on the birth of their daughter, Brittany Mae, on August 27. Rick is Associate Minister at Hillsdale Community Church, Portland.*

*Welcome to The Reverend Thomas and Sandra Caton who arrived in Pocatello at the end of August. The Reverend Mr. Caton has been called to be Minister of First Congregational Church, Pocatello.*

*First Congregational Church, Nampa, has called The Reverend William Arthur to be their pastor beginning November 15. Bill and Mary Arthur are no strangers to Central Pacific Conference since they served at Jennings Lodge, Condon and Ione before their move to Ritzville, WA., where they currently are.*

*He really moves around! Dr. Ruben Huene-mann that is. With his interim ministry completed at Pocatello, Ruben has agreed to serve as Interim Minister at First Congregational Church, Idaho Falls.*

*The Reverend Fred Strasburg, Medford, continues his convalescence following eye surgery in August. Fred appreciates all of the thoughts and prayers which accompany his convalescence.*

*The Reverend Jim Tomlin, Milwaukie UCC, took the lead in responding to a Milwaukie family who had been the victims of racial vandalism. A letter of concern was written and many signatures of Milwaukie residents gathered to let the family know that "...we stand with you, and that we stand against the incredible activity of those against you."*

*Both Ten O'Clock Church, Beavercreek, and Bethel Congregational Church, Beaverton, are celebrating centennials this year. As a part of their year-long observances, The Reverend Mike Hanback and The Reverend Bob Thoma exchanged pulpits on September 14.*



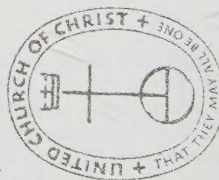
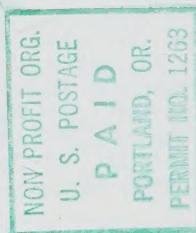
# DATES TO REMEMBER



- Oct.1: CAMP ADAMS ADMIN. COMMITTEE  
Interchurch Center
- 2: UCC WOMEN'S CLUSTER  
Ione
- 3-4: EXECUTIVE BOARD  
Interchurch Center
- 5: WESTSIDE YOUTH CLUSTER  
2-7, Forest Grove
- 7: WESTSIDE MINISTERS CLUSTER  
Noon, Hillsboro
- UCC WOMEN'S CLUSTER  
Medford or Ashland
- 8: PU/CPC RELATIONS TASK FORCE  
2-3:30, Forest Grove
- 9: UCC WOMEN'S CLUSTER.  
Corvallis
- 10: CHURCH & AGING TASK FORCE  
Noon, Interchurch Center
- 10: SEMINAR ON ADULT EDUCATION  
IN THE CHURCH  
6:30, Community Church-Cedar Hills
- 10-11: CHRISTIAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATES  
Community Church-Cedar Hills
- 12: EASTSIDE YOUTH CLUSTER  
2:30-7, Milwaukie UCC
- 17: LEADERSHIP & NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE  
9-4, Interchurch Center
- 17-18: FALL CONFERENCE COUNCIL  
ZION UCC, GRESHAM
- 19: ASSIST YOUTH CLUSTER  
1-7, Beaver Creek
- 25: VALLEY YOUTH CLUSTER  
10-3, 1st Cong'l, Eugene
- 26: OLIVER MEMORIAL LECTURE  
Everett Parker  
UCC Office of Communications  
1st Cong'l Church, Portland

## RE-SCHEDULED MINISTRY OF VOLUNTEERS EVENTS

- October 25 - 10:00-4:00  
Highland UCC, Portland
- October 27 - 6:30-10:00  
First Cong'l., The Dalles
- October 28 - 6:30-10:00  
First Cong'l., Eugene



NEWS

Published monthly except Jan-  
uary, July, and August by the  
Central Pacific Conference  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST